



News release

Construction complete at Met Office

18 December 2003

Construction work has been completed at the new [Met Office headquarters and operations centre](#) in Devon. The project has come in on schedule and on budget, and the building was today formally handed over by the [Stratus consortium](#) to the Defence Minister Ivor Caplin, on behalf of the Met Office.

Mr Caplin, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence, said: "I am very pleased to accept this splendid new Met Office building. The successful completion of this large, complex construction and relocation project, both within budget and under a strict timetable of just over two years, reflects greatly on the Met Office and the Stratus consortium. It shows what the right partnerships between the public and private sectors can achieve."

Peter Ewins, Met Office Chief Executive said: "The success of this move owes a great deal to the hard work of our staff and the detailed planning throughout the organisation. It was a tremendous challenge to move our 24/7 operations, including the two supercomputers, without any interruption in the service we provide to our customers. Relocation only runs smoothly if all partners are totally committed to success."



towards the end of 2001.

The contract, worth a total £150million, was awarded to the Stratus consortium. The construction phase, managed by Costain-Skanska, cost £80 million and the remainder will fund the maintenance and operation of the building by service providers GSL over the next 15 years.

Geoff Hunt, Costain-Skanska Project Director, said: "The construction team faced tough deadlines and met them all. That is a tribute to the commitment and skill of those involved and the relationship which we developed with Met Office representatives. We have produced a high-quality building which will serve the Met Office well."

Stephen Brown, Managing Director of GSL said: "Managing all of the infrastructure services during the relocation ensuring absolutely no interruption of service to the Met Office's clients has been challenging. Our people have worked in partnership with our consortium partners and the Met Office staff and we look forward to the many new challenges the next 15 years will bring."

The pioneering relocation reflects the Government's aim to move parts of the civil service out of London and the South East and has involved one of the most complex IT moves ever undertaken in Europe. The move has been so successful that Met Office is now offering advice and expertise to others contemplating major relocation moves.

The Met Office opted to move from an outdated 1960s headquarters building in Bracknell, Berkshire in November 2000 and selected Exeter from a range of potential locations. Work began on the Greenfield site on the edge of the city



The building has been constructed with resilience and business continuity in mind. Major IT systems are split and housed in separate IT halls and power can be generated on site. Office space is built around the Street, which houses a restaurant, gym, and shop along with some striking artwork. Externally the site is being landscaped to be sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

The official opening of the new building will take place in 2004, when the Met Office celebrates its 150th anniversary.

[More about the new building.](#)

[View photographs taken during the construction work](#)

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